

SAMHSA SOAR SEPTEMBER 2020 ENEWS



The SAMHSA SOAR TA Center is closing out another successful year, thanks to the support of our SOAR State Team Leads, SOAR Local Leads, and SOAR practitioners across the country! While COVID-19 disrupted many, if not all, plans for 2020, we are so grateful for the SOAR community's tenacity and responsiveness. We all were flexible and innovative in delivering services to SOAR practitioners and completing SOAR-assisted applications for eligible adults and youth.

We are looking forward to another year of working with the SOAR community in our new contract year! In Fiscal Year 2021, the SAMHSA SOAR TA Center will continue to support SOAR practitioners, so they feel confident in submitting high-quality and complete SSI/SSDI applications. Join the SAMHSA SOAR TA Center in the following technical assistance events:

- [SOARing Over Lunch calls](#)
- [Quarterly topical webinars addressing critical issues for SOAR stakeholders](#)
- National SOAR Online Course Review Sessions
- Updated information in the [Library of the SOARWorks website](#)
- One-on-one support (as needed) from your [SAMHSA SOAR TA Center liaison](#)

We look forward to having you SOAR with us in Fiscal Year 2021!

Transitions at the SAMHSA SOAR TA Center



Abigail Kirkman



Dazara Ware



Jen Elder

Introducing the New Co-Assistant Directors of the SAMHSA SOAR TA Center

We are thrilled to announce that Dazara Ware and Abigail Kirkman have been named assistant co-directors of the SAMHSA SOAR TA Center!

Dazara has been an integral part of the SAMHSA SOAR TA Center since 2011. She is a subject-matter expert in the implementation of SOAR in criminal justice settings. Abigail has been a pillar of the SAMHSA SOAR TA Center since 2012. She is a subject-matter expert in integrating SOAR into American Indian/Alaska Native communities and rural communities. You may have met Abigail and Dazara at a SOAR Leadership Academy, in a strategic planning meeting, on a SOARing Over Lunch Call, or in a SOAR Online Course Review Session cohort! We are so pleased to celebrate their leadership transition. Join us in wishing them congratulations!

Previewing the Homeless and Housing Resource Center

Jen Elder, assistant director and national policy and partnerships coordinator, will be transitioning from her role at the SAMHSA SOAR TA Center to assume a new role as Director of the SAMHSA-funded Homeless and Housing Resource Center (HHRC), operated by Policy Research, Inc.

Jen will now serve as a Senior Advisor to the SAMHSA SOAR TA Center, and we are glad to have her still working close by in the HHRC! The HHRC will provide training and technical assistance to the general public and persons working with individuals who are experiencing or at risk of homelessness. Stay tuned to hear more in the coming months! Please join us in wishing Jen best of luck in her new role and thanking her for her incredible contributions to the SOAR model over the past 8 years.

Sharing Our Successes

In the Time of COVID-19: SOARing With Soul Food

This SOAR success story was submitted by Jon Katherine Martins, SOAR practitioner and local lead at [Emma Norton Services](#) in Saint Paul, Minnesota.

The importance of chemistry between client and SOAR case manager is undeniable. One of the hallmarks of Emma Norton's SOAR program is our ability to build trust and rapport with the men, women, and children we serve. When I started to work from home, I was worried

about the difficulties I would have accurately tracking shifting emotions, facial expressions, or body language via video chat and how impossible that would be when meetings could only happen over the phone. I was also concerned that I might come across as more clinical and less warm or empathetic, making it much more challenging to build rapport and trust.

My first client, on my first day working from home, was new to me. I knew, from his referral form, that he experienced a personality disorder and post-traumatic stress disorder. By the end of our first meeting, I learned that he had spent time in prison. And I heard something else. His voice was flat, expressionless, and apathetic, with interspersed moments of agitation when I asked a question that he wouldn't or couldn't answer. "I don't trust people," he said.

[Read More](#)

First-Time Practitioner SOAR to Approval in Minnesota

Summer Conard from Stearns County in Saint Cloud, Minnesota, wrote in to share this fabulous success story:

"In summer 2019, I received a referral from a youth outreach worker for a male who had aged out of the program. He had lost his housing and was on the verge of losing his housing voucher. He had no supports, no identification, and was again street homeless with a recent eviction on his record. James* has been in "the system" since he was 6 years old at the Children's Home. James has a number of mental health disorders that result in explosive behavior. He did not respond well to authority and did not trust anyone.

When I first met with James, I had not completed my SOAR training and had no idea what/how to do it. I completed my SOAR training and got to work. A lot of work went into his application—we had gathered documentation, attended medical and mental health appointments, advocated with professionals, and completed two consultative exams. I was honest with him about my concerns, but I called his previous employers and gathered as much information as possible for my Medical Summary Report.

During our time together, we established his medical care, mental health care, established his own insurance, obtained a new ID for him, connected him with county benefits, reconnected James with his child, paid off a substantial bill to his last apartment, and obtained two extensions on his housing voucher.

James was approved within 6 months for both Supplemental Security Income and Social Security Disability Insurance, and received back payment. He moved into his own apartment right before Christmas 2019."

Congratulations, Summer! What an incredible success. Summer's words of wisdom to other SOAR practitioners is to "never give up." Summer said, "During this process, I was told that he was too young, didn't have enough failed work attempts, and wasn't seeing the right medical/mental health doctors. I poured my heart and soul into his case, and I am so proud of the outcome."

[Submit Your SOAR Success](#)

*Sharing Our Successes stories are edited for brevity and clarity. All client names have been changed to protect anonymity.

SOAR Jobs

Texas

Primrose Health Solutions is seeking a full-time SOAR Case Manager based in Desoto, Texas. The successful candidate will assist with SSI/SSDI disability benefit applications for individuals with serious mental illness who are at risk of experiencing homelessness.

Washington, DC

Pathways to Housing DC is seeking a full-time Representative Payee Program Manager to oversee all aspects of the organization's Social Security Rep Payee program. The Rep Payee Program Manager will ensure that Pathways to Housing DC remains in compliance with federal representative payee guidelines and will supervise and manage the interactions, practices, and policies of our accounts.

Learn more about these jobs on the [SOARWorks website](#). Do you have a job posting you would like to share with the SOAR community? Submit it to the [SAMHSA SOAR TA Center](#)!

Events

[SOARing Over Lunch Conference Calls](#)

September 15, 2020, 1:00-2:00 p.m. ET

The next SOARing Over Lunch Conference Call will take place on September 15, 2020, at 1:00 p.m. ET! The SAMHSA SOAR TA Center hosts this series of informal monthly calls designed to help support SOAR efforts across the country. Participants can join to ask about any SOAR-related question they may have.

[Add SOARing Over Lunch to Your Calendar](#)

Get Social with the SAMHSA SOAR TA Center

Hear more about what SAMHSA SOAR is up to via [@samhsagov](#) on Twitter, [@samhsa](#) on Facebook, and [Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration](#) on LinkedIn!

Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA) 122,107 followers 1mo • 🌐

CASE MANAGERS: While individuals experiencing or at risk of homelessness are more visible in urban settings, homelessness is also prevalent in rural areas. Assisting eligible applicants in rural areas poses a unique set of challenges, which is why the SAMHSA SOAR TA Center put together this resource to help SOAR case managers working in rural communities <https://lnkd.in/eXGwmsT>



SOAR in Rural Communities
soarworks.prainc.com • 1 min read

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Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA) 122,107 followers 1mo • 🌐

SOAR PROVIDERS: The SAMHSA SOAR TA Center has resources to support SSI/SSDI Outreach, Access, and Recovery (SOAR) providers so you can continue to assist applicants during COVID-19. Learn more about the impact of stimulus payments on [Social Security Administration](#) benefits and ways to continue providing SOAR services while keeping a safe physical/social distance <https://lnkd.in/g7dtkhz>



COVID-19 Resources for SOAR Providers | SOAR Works!
soarworks.prainc.com • 4 min read

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Federal Updates

[Social Security Adds to Compassionate Allowances List](#)

Social Security Administration (SSA) Commissioner Andrew Saul announced five new Compassionate Allowances conditions: Desmoplastic Small Round Cell Tumors, GM1 Gangliosidosis—Infantile and Juvenile Forms, Nicolaides-Baraitser Syndrome, Rubinstein-Taybi Syndrome, and Secondary Adenocarcinoma of the Brain. Compassionate Allowances is a program to quickly identify severe medical conditions and diseases that meet Social Security's disability benefits standards.

[Opportunity for Public Comment on SSA's Waiver of Recovery of Certain Overpayment Debts Accruing during the COVID-19 Pandemic Period Rule](#)

Comment deadline: October 26, 2020

SSA has issued an interim final rule and requests comments from the public. The purpose of this rule is to revise SSA's regulations on how the recovery of certain overpayment debts is waived. SSA will apply this interim final rule when an affected beneficiary requests waiver of certain overpayment debts that accrued during a portion of the COVID-19 pandemic period. Under this rule, SSA may waive recovery of these overpayment debts using a streamlined internal process.

[SAMHSA Webinar: How to Develop a Competitive Grant Application](#)

September 17, 2020, and October 22, 2020, 2:00-3:30 p.m. ET

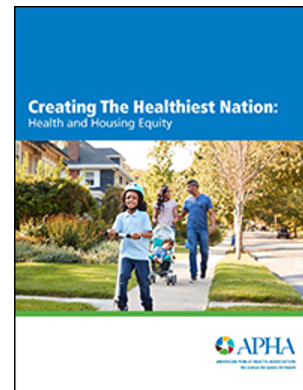
SAMHSA's Office of Financial Resources will be conducting a webinar, held on two separate dates, on how to develop a competitive grant application. The webinar will address:

- Learning the four registration processes that need to be completed
- Preparing to apply for a grant
- Reviewing key components of the funding opportunity announcement
- Responding effectively to the evaluation criteria
- Identifying resources and technical assistance that are available

APHA Releases New Report on Health and Housing Equity

The American Public Health Association has released a new, free report, *Creating the Healthiest Nation: Health and Housing Equity*. This report:

- demonstrates how structural racism has led to the current state of housing inequality in America;
- examines how biased policies have impacted housing affordability, quality, safety, and stability and resulted in disparate impacts to certain groups, including different racial and ethnic groups, people with disabilities, older adults, youth, and individuals who identify as LGBTQ+;
- explains the link between poor housing and poor health; and
- outlines numerous ways to advance change in housing equity via policy, cross-sector partnerships, and community engagement.



The Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA) SSI/SSDI Outreach, Access, and Recovery (SOAR) Technical Assistance (TA) Center is sponsored by SAMHSA, U.S. Department of Health and Human Services (HHS).

Disclaimer: The SAMHSA SOAR Technical Assistance Center is sending this eNews with support from SAMHSA, HHS. Its contents are solely the responsibility of the authors and do not necessarily represent the official view of HHS or SAMHSA.

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